



# LEISURE MANAGEMENT

*Where has all my free time gone, and what will I do with it when I find it?*

From the Dalai Lama's "one human family" to Dave Matthews's "hands and feet are all alike," the pundits of our day seem to agree: Despite what makes us each unique, in most ways we are fundamentally all the same. We inhabit the same planet, experience the same human condition and face many of the same universal pleasures and challenges, regardless of our age, culture, profession and social position.

One such universal challenge is the job of managing our time. Ironically, the hardest part is not necessarily our urgent chores and responsibilities – those often get completed almost automatically, precisely because they are so urgent. For many of us, the real hurdle is *leisure management*: finding the time we need to do the things we love – and filling that time with pursuits that engage and fulfill us.

## SWAMPED OR BORED

Leisure management issues tend to fall into two categories: For some of us, every day is so filled with the demands of our structured time that we are left with no "free" time for ourselves. Others actually have plenty of unassigned time but lack meaningful, engaging, fulfilling activities to fill it with.

While these two conditions may seem like polar opposites, they are really two sides of the same coin. Whether swamped or bored, we can't free ourselves from the feeling that what we *want* to be doing is nowhere as important as what we *have* to be doing (or as what we feel we *ought* to be doing).

## "NOT ENOUGH HOURS IN A DAY"

Many of us feel overwhelmed by our obligations or frustrated that there are "not enough hours in a day." Between our careers and our families, our household chores and pressing errands, how can we find time for ourselves? (And what would we do with such time if we had it?) Here's a four-point plan:

- *Take stock of your available time* – We're all good at keeping to-do lists, but don't usually track our "down" time. Making a list of what you typically do when you have no urgent tasks, can help you realize how much free time you really have.
- *Examine your needs* – Sometimes we become so involved in the routine of getting the job done that we forget to consider our own needs. What do you really *enjoy* doing? Without censoring or judging yourself, make a list of the first things that come to mind.
- *Make a commitment* – Finding a balance between work and leisure is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Make a commitment to yourself, to make leisure a part of your routine.
- *Follow through* – Now you know when you're free and what you like to do. Combine the two by scheduling the leisure activities you've identified during some of the available spots. Be as methodical in keeping those appointments as you are about any other task. Treat each new day as a new opportunity to reconnect with friends and family, try out something new, or treat yourself to an adventure.

## YOUR EAP CAN HELP

Managing your leisure time can be easier if you utilize the tools at your disposal. For example, your EAP provides concierge and organizational services that can help you manage your life and find a healthy balance between structured and free time.

For more information, please call us at:

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